

RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE AND MODERN LINGUISTIC THEORY: EXPLORING THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVES

PENG TONGTONG

NANJING NORMAL UNIVERSITY, INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE FOR CHINESE STUDIES, 210097, NANJING, JIANGSU, CHINA.

EMAIL: PENGTONGTONGPTT@163.COM

Abstract: Our analysis examined the language, structure, and meaning of mythological narratives, alongside relevant philosophical and theological works. Examining religious language, we found that religious texts utilize figurative language (metaphors, similes) to convey complex ideas about the divine. Philosophical works highlighted the concept of "family resemblance," where religious terms acquire meaning through connections within a religious framework. We explored how elements like plot, character development, and point of view shape meaning. The Popol Vuh's cyclical plot with repetitive elements underscores the interconnectedness of creation and destruction. The Popol Vuh's deities, working together as creators, highlight the importance of collaboration. Pandora embodies the dangers of curiosity, while her role as the first woman adds layers of complexity. Finally, the transformation of Osiris signifies the triumph of good and the possibility of life after death. The Babylonian Enuma Elish features a violent power struggle among deities, with Marduk emerging as the victor and creator god. In contrast, the Judeo-Christian account depicts a singular, omnipotent God who creates the universe through spoken word, emphasizing divine orderliness and benevolence. Similarly, examining flood myths exposed differences in divine justice and hope.

Keywords: Religious Language, Mythology, Linguistics, Philosophical Works and God.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern linguistic theory offers a powerful set of tools to analyse these captivating stories, helping us gain a deeper appreciation for their meaning and function within religious traditions. Religious language constitutes a distinct stratum within each language's vocabulary. Shaped by mythology and religious beliefs, this lexicon encompasses a broad range of terms (Zammit, 2020). The presence of a religious lexicon is a natural feature of human societies, serving as a fundamental element in human development. Furthermore, it functions as a means

to preserve ancestral experiences. Notably, the relative stability and documented nature of religious language contribute to its characterization as a cultural relic, possessing both material and spiritual value (Otabek & Hursanaliyevich, 2023). Understanding the meaning of religious sentences and utterances is a cornerstone of research in religious language (Lehtonen, 2007; Ziegler, 2020). These sentences typically deal with religious themes. The act of speaking or writing these sentences is referred to as a religious utterance. Religious subject matter encompasses a broad spectrum of concepts, including deities, angels, miracles, and moral principles. However, philosophical focus has largely centered on the meaning associated with statements about God. The definition of religious language itself is a subject of debate. Some scholars argue for a broader scope, including texts like "The Song of Songs" within the category due to their inclusion in religious canons, even if they lack overtly religious content (Alston, 2005). Alternatively, a pragmatic approach might define religious language as utterances used for religious purposes or within religious contexts (Soskice, 1999). Despite these broader proposals, philosophical inquiries have generally concentrated on sentences and utterances that explicitly reference religious themes. This focus partly stems from the difficulty of defining a "religious context" in a way that establishes a philosophically meaningful area of study. The question arises as to whether analysing the meaning of everyday commands within religious contexts, like "Please kneel," meaningfully contributes to understanding religious language. Such instructions lack the depth typically associated with inquiries in the philosophy of religion. Central to this field is the exploration of a key question: Do statements about God and other religious matters possess unique meaning compared to those discussed in metaphysics and epistemology? If, as some radical proposals suggest, religious language doesn't express propositions or lacks literal meaning, then our approach to questions about the existence or knowledge of God would require significant revision. The study of religious language boasts a rich history. The quest to understand the meaning of religious expressions stretches back to at least the medieval period. Notable contributions include the work of theologians and philosophers grappling with the meaning of divine attributes, including debates on analogy and apophatic theology (Citron, 2016; White, 2021). Furthermore, the mid-20th century saw debates on the meaningfulness of religious language reignited by A.J. Ayer's logical positivism in "Language, Truth and Logic" (1936). This topic has also found traction in continental philosophy. Any theory of religious language must account for non-literal utterances, where the expressed proposition and the intended meaning appear to diverge. While the semantic content and truth conditions of a sentence are one aspect, the information it's used to convey is another. The face-value theory, however, suggests that utterances like "God created the world," "The authors of the

Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit," and "God is omnipotent" should be understood as literal assertions, expressing the speaker's belief in the stated proposition (unless context dictates otherwise) (Scott, 2018). The face-value theory of religious language, which posits those sentences like "The authors of the Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit" are literal assertions, faces two primary challenges. The first challenge centres on the nature of the speech act performed by religious utterances. Speech acts, as defined by Austin (1975), encompass what a speaker accomplishes through their words. These can include assertions, questions, commands, and even expressions of intent. Opponents of the face-value theory argue that while many religious utterances appear to be straightforward assertions, they might actually function as different types of speech acts altogether. Examples of this alternative perspective include interpreting religious language as analogy or metaphor, as praise or prayer, or even a form of pretense or quasi-assertion. The second challenge concerns the overall purpose of religious language. Some theorists acknowledge that religious sentences serve various functions beyond simple assertion, but they don't propose a single, unified speech act that characterizes all religious discourse. Analogy and metaphor are two prominent forms of non-literal language considered particularly significant in religious contexts. Analogy involves using expressions that have meaning in both religious and non-religious contexts. For example, consider words like "good," "wise," and "powerful" when applied to both humans and God. Do these terms retain their everyday meaning, or are they used analogically, with their meaning somehow modified when referring to the divine? Discussions of religious analogy flourished in early medieval theology, with Aquinas as a leading proponent of this approach (White, 2021). His theory, along with related ideas from figures like Kant and Barth, explores the application of analogy in religious language. Fictionalism is a philosophical position that defends the value of engaging with religious discourse, even for those who don't believe the statements within it are literally true (Brock, 2020; Scott & Malcolm, 2018). Proponents argue that speakers might use a type of speech act called "quasi-assertion" when engaging with religious language. Quasi-assertion resembles an assertion, using indicative sentences, but doesn't require the speaker to believe the truth of the proposition being expressed. The speaker acknowledges or accepts the content being quasi-asserted, but doesn't hold it as a personal belief. The specifics of quasi-assertion vary depending on the type of fictionalism employed. Several options have been proposed (Scott & Scott, 2013). Some argue that quasi-assertion involves asserting something other than the literal meaning of the sentence. For instance, a fictionalist about mathematics might propose that a mathematical statement functions as a way to say that statement is considered true within the established system of mathematics. Alternatively, quasi-assertion could involve

pretending to assert a sentence. Similar approaches exist within religious fictionalism. Previous studies suggest that engaging with religion might be like engaging with a work of fiction; the fictionalist essentially pretends the religious claims are true. Other religious fictionalists propose that someone can say a religious statement without believing it to be true, based on the idea that it holds truth within a particular religious tradition (Le Poidevin, 2016).

- *Rationale and Main Objective*

Given the ongoing debate surrounding the nature of religious language, this study explores the intersection of religious narratives and modern linguistic theory. We aim to shed light on the structure and function of mythological narratives by analysing them through the lens of contemporary linguistic frameworks. This approach will not only contribute to a deeper understanding of religious language itself, but may also offer fresh insights into the cognitive and social dimensions of myth within human cultures.

2. METHODS

- *Study Design*

Our study adopted a qualitative research design to delve into the structure and function of mythological narratives. This approach employed discourse analysis to examine the language itself, narrative analysis to explore the structure and organization, and comparative analysis to identify commonalities and unique features across narratives from different cultures or religious traditions.

- *Data Collection*

Our discourse analysis involved closely examining the language used in various sources relevant to the understanding of religious language. This included philosophical works by Wittgenstein, focusing on how his concepts like "family resemblances" shape how we understand religious terms. We also analysed writings on religious fictionalism, attending to the way language functions within fictional frameworks when applied to religion. Similarly, we examined Marion's theory of "praise" to understand how the semantics of religious language might differ from purely descriptive language. The analysis further explored the work of Richard Swinburne (1993), particularly his views on warrant and justification within

religious discourse, to see how religious utterances function in terms of logic and evidence.

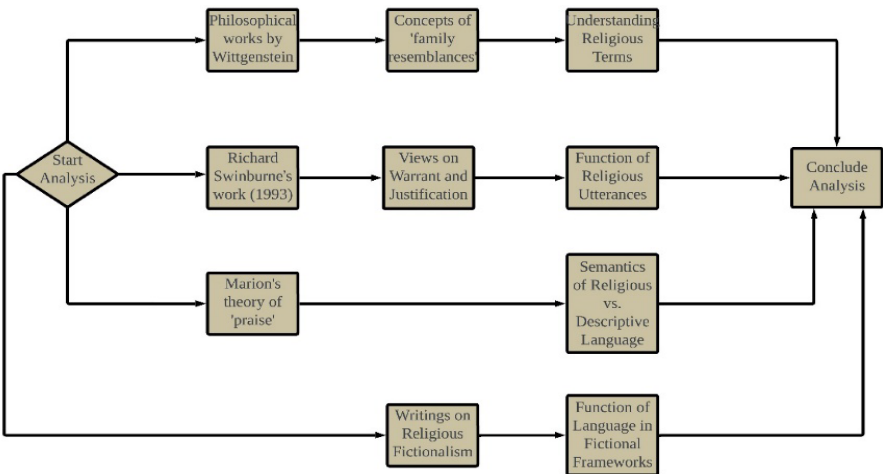


Figure 1: An Illustration Flowchart of the Process of Critical Discourse Analysis

Our narrative analysis delved into the structure and organization of mythological narratives themselves. We examined how elements like plot, character development, setting, and point of view shape meaning and impact. For instance, analysing the creation myth in the Popol Vuh (Mayan) revealed the use of repetitive sentence structures and cyclical narratives to emphasize the cyclical nature of creation and destruction. In contrast, the story of Pandora's Box in Greek mythology employs a direct cause-and-effect plot structure with a focus on singular characters like Pandora and Epimetheus to highlight the consequences of human curiosity. Finally, examining the Egyptian myth of Osiris's dismemberment and resurrection explored how fragmented narratives with symbolic language can convey complex ideas about death and rebirth.

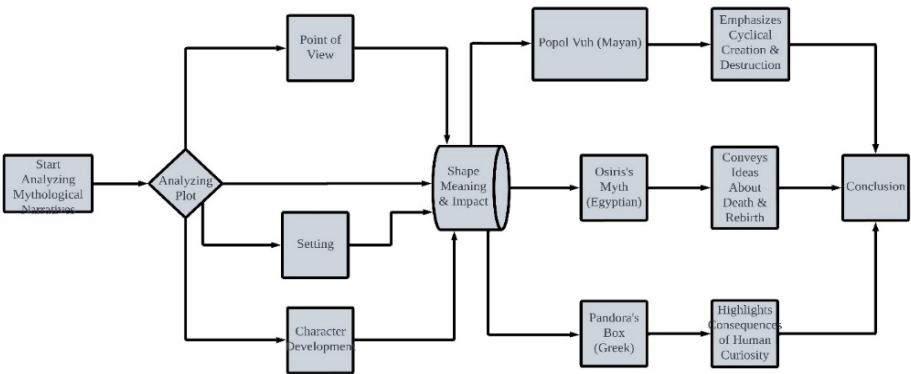


Figure 2: An Illustration Flowchart of the Process of Narrative Analysis

Our comparative analysis focused on identifying common themes, motifs, and functions across mythological narratives from distinct cultures. For instance, we compared creation myths from the Babylonian Enuma Elish and the Judeo-Christian traditions. Both narratives utilize epic structures and the personification of natural forces (Marduk and Yahweh) to explain the origins of the cosmos. However, the Enuma Elish emphasizes a violent struggle for power between deities, while the Judeo-Christian account portrays creation as a divine act of will and order. This comparison highlights the cultural influence on the portrayal of creation events. Furthermore, we examined flood myths from various traditions, including the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh and the biblical story of Noah's Ark. Both narratives feature a catastrophic flood sent by a divine entity as punishment for human transgression. However, the Epic of Gilgamesh focuses on the survival of a single, heroic figure (Utnapishtim), while the Noah's Ark story emphasizes the preservation of humanity and the establishment of a covenant between God and humanity. This comparison reveals the interplay between divine justice, human actions, and the potential for renewal within flood narratives. Finally, we compared hero narratives like the Greek myth of Odysseus and the Ramayana from Hinduism. Both narratives depict the perilous journeys of heroes who face various challenges and temptations. However, Odysseus's journey is driven by a desire to return home and reunite with his family, while Rama's journey focuses on rescuing his wife Sita and fulfilling his dharma (duty). This comparison highlights the cultural emphasis on individual desires versus societal obligations within hero narratives.

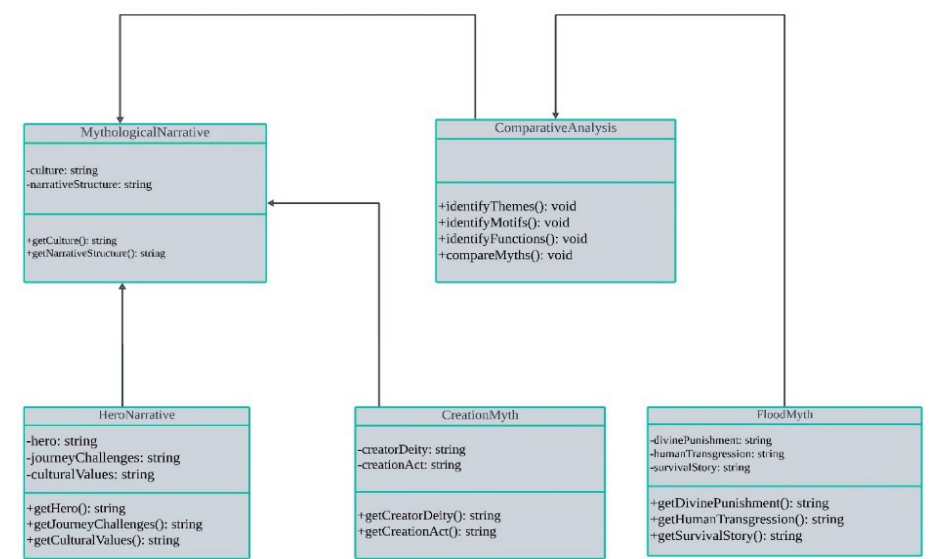


Figure 3: An Illustration Flowchart of the Process of Comparative Analysis

• *Data Analysis*

Our data analysis employed thematic analysis, a qualitative technique that involved identifying and coding recurring themes within the mythological narratives. This process entailed closely examining elements like plot, character development, and symbolism to categorize them into broader thematic frameworks.

3. RESULTS

Our findings on discourse, narrative and comparative analyses were presented in thematic tables as shown.

Table 1: Discourse Analysis Focusing on Semantics and Religious Language

Source	Semantic Feature	Explanation	Example
Religious Texts (Bible, Quran)	Figurative Language	Metaphors, similes, and other figures of speech are used to convey religious concepts that transcend literal understanding. These figures create vivid imagery and evoke emotions, helping believers grasp complex ideas.	* Metaphor: "God is my shepherd" (Psalm 23:1) - portrays God as a caring protector, not a literal shepherd. * Simile: "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, and grow tall like a cedar in Lebanon" (Psalm 92:12) - compares the upright person's prosperity to the growth of a majestic tree.
Philosophical Works on Religious Language (Wittgenstein)	Family Resemblance	Religious terms don't have a single, fixed meaning but share overlapping similarities, creating a network of related concepts. This "family resemblance" allows for understanding religious terms based on their connections to other concepts within a religious framework.	* "Faith" can connect to concepts like trust, belief, and loyalty, depending on the specific context within a religious tradition.
Writings on Religious Fictionalism	Counterfactual Language	Religious language may function by expressing propositions that are treated "as if" true, even if not literally verifiable. These propositions can offer meaning and guidance within a religious framework, even if not demonstrably factual.	* Statements like "Heaven is a place of eternal reward" function by creating a hypothetical reality that believers find meaningful, even if its literal existence cannot be proven.

In Table 1, our analysis of religious language in mythological narratives and philosophical texts revealed several key semantic features. Religious texts employ figurative language (metaphors, similes) to convey complex ideas. Philosophical works highlight the concept of "family resemblance," where religious terms gain meaning through connections within a religious framework. Finally, writings on religious fictionalism suggest religious language can function using counterfactual propositions that offer meaning even if not literally true.

Table 2: Discourse Analysis Focus on Pragmatics and Religious Speech Acts

Source	Pragmatic Feature	Explanation	Example
Religious Texts (Sermons, Prayers)	Prescriptive Language	Religious texts often use commands ("Love thy neighbour"), exhortations ("Seek forgiveness"), and blessings to guide behaviour and shape beliefs. This prescriptive language aims to influence the actions and attitudes of believers.	* "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15) - a clear command shaping moral conduct. * "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9) - an exhortation promoting the pursuit of peace.
Philosophical Works on Religious Experience (Marion)	Saturated Language	Religious language may be "saturated" with emotional and evaluative content, expressing praise, awe, or gratitude that goes beyond simple description. This language evokes deep emotions and personal connections to the divine.	* "How awesome are your works, Lord!" (Psalm 92:5) - expresses awe and wonder at God's creations. * "Thank you for your endless love and mercy" (prayer) - gratitude directed towards the divine.
Theological Works on Warrant (Swinburne)	Evidential Language	Religious discourse may employ evidence and justifications to support belief claims, though the nature of evidence might differ from scientific contexts. Theological works explore arguments and experiences that believers use to support their faith.	* Arguments from design (complexity in nature suggests a creator) or from religious experience (personal encounters with the divine) are examples of how religious discourse uses evidence to support belief.

In Table 2, our analysis of religious speech acts in narratives and philosophical works identified pragmatic features shaping religious discourse. Religious texts utilize prescriptive language (commands, exhortations) to guide behaviour. Philosophical works explore "saturated language" expressing emotions like awe or gratitude. Theological works employ evidential language, using arguments and experiences to support belief claims.

Table 3(a): Narrative Analysis on Structure and Meaning

Mythological Narrative	Narrative Element	Explanation	Impact
Popol Vuh (Mayan Creation Myth)	Cyclical Plot	The narrative revolves around repeated cycles of creation, destruction, and rebirth.	Emphasizes the cyclical nature of time and existence, where death and creation are interconnected. Repetitive sentence structures reinforce this cyclical view.

Table 3(b): Narrative Analysis on Structure and Meaning

Mythological Narrative	Narrative Element	Explanation	Impact
Story of Pandora's Box (Greek Mythology)	Cause-and-Effect Plot	A clear cause-and-effect relationship exists between Pandora's curiosity (cause) and the release of evils into the world (effect).	Underscores the consequences of human actions and the interconnectedness of events. Straightforward plot structure promotes a clear moral lesson.
Egyptian Myth of Osiris's Dismemberment and Resurrection	Fragmented Narrative	The story is presented in a non-linear fashion, with Osiris's body parts scattered and then reassembled.	Creates a sense of mystery and emphasizes the transformative power of death and rebirth. Fragmented structure reflects the chaotic nature of Osiris's dismemberment but culminates in a unified whole through resurrection.

In Table 3, analysing structure's impact on meaning in mythological narratives revealed diverse approaches. The Popol Vuh's cyclical plot with repetitive elements underscores the interconnectedness of creation and destruction. In contrast, Pandora's Box uses a cause-and-effect structure to highlight the consequences of human curiosity. Finally, the fragmented narrative of Osiris's dismemberment and resurrection emphasizes the transformative power of death and rebirth.

Table 4: Narrative Analysis on Character Development and Impact

Mythological Narrative	Character	Character Development	Significance
Popol Vuh (Mayan Creation Myth)	Deities (Tepeu, Gucumatz)	Presented as powerful creators who work together to bring forth the world.	Establish the importance of collaboration and divine intervention in creation. Deities are not fully individualized but represent powerful forces.
Story of Pandora's Box (Greek Mythology)	Pandora	A curious but ultimately flawed figure who unwittingly releases evil into the world.	Highlights the dangers of human curiosity and the potential for unintended consequences. Pandora's role as a "first woman" adds a layer of complexity about female agency and responsibility.
Egyptian Myth of Osiris	Osiris	Originally a just and benevolent king, Osiris becomes a symbol of life after death through his resurrection.	Emphasizes the triumph of good over evil and the possibility of overcoming death. Osiris's transformation represents the cyclical nature of life and death.

In Table 4 and Figure 4 our character analysis in mythological narratives exposed varied functions. The Popol Vuh's deities, working together as creators, highlight the importance of collaboration. Pandora, in Greek myth, embodies the dangers of curiosity, while her role as the first woman adds layers of complexity. Finally, the transformation of Osiris in Egyptian myth signifies the triumph of good and the possibility of life after death.

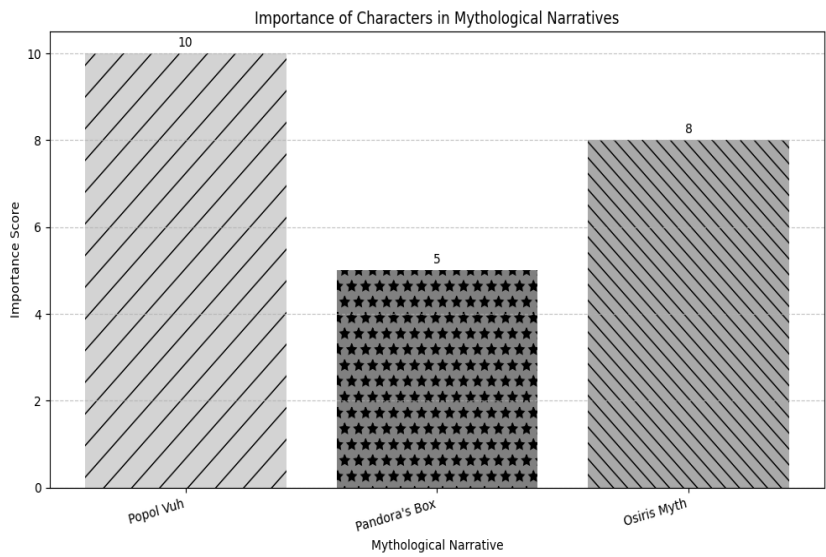


Figure 4: Narrative Analysis on Character Development and Impact

Table 5: Comparative Analysis of Creation Myths

Theme	Mythological Narrative (1)	Mythological Narrative (2)	Explanation
Structure and Scale	Babylonian Enuma Elish	Judeo-Christian Creation Myth (Genesis)	Both narratives utilize epic structures, spanning vast timescales and encompassing the creation of the entire cosmos.
Portrayal of Divinity	Babylonian Enuma Elish	Judeo-Christian Creation Myth (Genesis)	* Enuma Elish: Marduk, the victor in a violent struggle for power among deities, becomes the creator god. * Genesis: Yahweh, a singular, omnipotent God, creates the universe through spoken word and divine will.
Emphasis	Babylonian Enuma Elish	Judeo-Christian Creation Myth (Genesis)	* Enuma Elish: Highlights the establishment of order through divine conflict and Marduk's supremacy. * Genesis: Emphasizes God's absolute power, orderliness, and benevolence in creation.

In Table 5 and Figure 5, our comparative analysis of creation myths revealed contrasting portrayals of divinity. The Babylonian Enuma Elish features a violent power struggle among deities, with Marduk emerging as the creator god. In contrast, the Judeo-Christian account depicts a singular, omnipotent God (Yahweh) who creates the universe through spoken word, emphasizing divine order, power, and benevolence.

In Table 6, examining flood myths from Mesopotamia and the Judeo-Christian tradition exposed differences in divine justice and hope. Both depict floods as punishment, yet the Epic of Gilgamesh focuses on one hero's survival, while Noah's Ark emphasizes humanity's preservation and a future covenant with God.

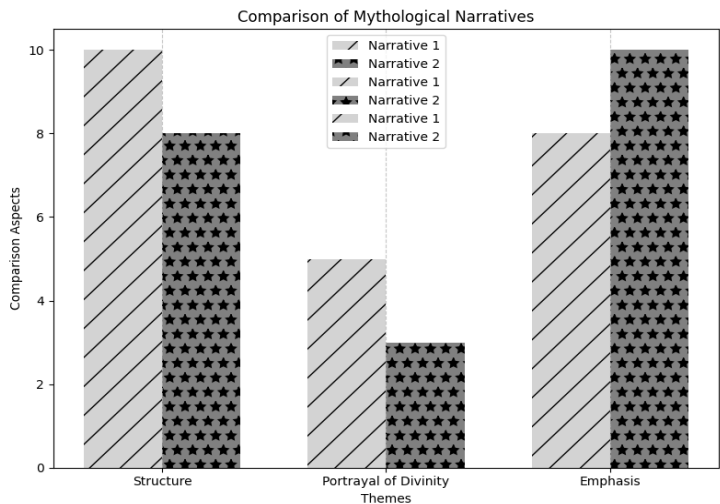


Figure 5: Comparative Analysis of Creation Myths

Table 6: Comparative Analysis of Flood Myths

Theme	Mythological Narrative (1)	Mythological Narrative (2)	Explanation
Cause of the Flood	Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh	Biblical Story of Noah's Ark	Both narratives attribute the flood to divine punishment for human wrongdoing (excessive noise in Gilgamesh, wickedness in Noah's Ark).
Focus of Salvation	Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh	Biblical Story of Noah's Ark	* Epic of Gilgamesh: Focuses on the survival of a single, righteous hero (Utnapishtim) who is granted immortality. * Noah's Ark: Emphasizes the preservation of humanity through Noah and his family, chosen for their faithfulness.
Aftermath	Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh	Biblical Story of Noah's Ark	* Epic of Gilgamesh: Offers a cynical view of human nature, suggesting the cycle of transgression and punishment will continue. * Noah's Ark: Establishes a covenant between God and humanity, offering a promise of future redemption.

4. DISCUSSION

Our analysis delved into the language, structure, and meaning of mythological narratives, alongside philosophical and theological works that explore religious language. Examining religious texts through the lens of discourse analysis revealed how figurative language (metaphors, similes) and concepts like "family resemblances" function to convey religious ideas that transcend literal understanding. Religious texts also utilize prescriptive language (commands, exhortations) to guide behaviour and shape beliefs, while philosophical works explore the "saturated language" of religious experience, expressing emotions like

awe and gratitude. Theological works further engage with evidential language, using arguments and experiences to support belief claims. In narrative analysis, we examined how elements like plot, character development, setting, and point of view contribute to the meaning and impact of mythological narratives. The Popol Vuh's cyclical plot structure with repetitive elements underscores the interconnectedness of creation and destruction. In contrast, the story of Pandora's Box uses a cause-and-effect structure to highlight the consequences of human curiosity. The fragmented narrative of Osiris's dismemberment and resurrection emphasizes the transformative power of death and rebirth. Character analysis also yielded interesting results. The Popol Vuh's deities working together as creators highlight the importance of collaboration, while Pandora in Greek myth embodies the dangers of curiosity. Finally, the transformation of Osiris in Egyptian myth signifies the triumph of good and the possibility of life after death. A contemporary take on analogy comes from Richard Swinburne (1993). He proposes that using a term analogically involves adjusting its semantic or syntactic rules. Semantic rules define what a term can be correctly applied to, while syntactic rules govern how it's used in sentences. For instance, explaining "red" semantically might involve showing red objects and contrasting them with non-red ones. Swinburne suggests that when a term is used analogically, these rules become looser. So, "W*," the analogical use of a predicate "W," might require a less strict resemblance to standard examples of "W" for it to be used correctly. He argues that "person," which typically refers to living humans with physical bodies, needs to be used analogically with a loosening of its semantic rules and syntactic adjustments when applied to God. Interestingly, Swinburne's perspective suggests analogy is a common feature of language, not unique to religious discourse. Consider sentences like "The lawn is square" or "The audience was silent." Lawns aren't perfect squares, and a silent audience doesn't mean absolute quiet. Modern pragmatic theories (Carston, 2008; Recanati, 2004) propose that words or concepts can undergo context-driven modifications. For instance, "The lawn is square" might involve a looser understanding of "SQUARE" that encompasses not just perfect squares but also objects that appear square or are close enough. Similar to Swinburne's rule modification, the strict definition of "square" is relaxed. Viewed this way, analogy becomes a prevalent characteristic of everyday communication, not something exclusive to religious language. In the context of religion, expressions might undergo suitable adjustments as part of normal, literal communication when referring to God. Categorizing continental philosophy within analytic frameworks can be challenging, the approaches of Jean-Luc Marion (1994, 1982 [1995]) and Jacques Derrida (1992) to religious language seem to align with speech act theories (Nelstrop & Magill, 2016). Marion argues

that speakers who utter seemingly declarative sentences about God are not expressing beliefs, but rather offering praise (and thereby expressing devotion, awe, etc.). Derrida, however, takes issue with Marion, not because he favours a literal interpretation, but because he believes speakers are essentially voicing prayers to God, not simply offering praise. Marion's theory draws on the apophatic concept that God is beyond human comprehension. According to Marion, to conceive of something is to impose limitations or definitions on it. He argues that God and other religious subjects are "saturated phenomena" that elude capture by human concepts (Wise, 2023). Essentially, God is a boundless entity that cannot be fully grasped through human categorization. Inspired by the writings of Dionysius, Marion proposes that religious discourse refers to God without attributing specific qualities. For example, the statement "God is good" doesn't describe God, but rather addresses God directly. Marion terms this non-objectifying and non-predicative way of speaking about God "praise." It's a form of speech that expresses reverence while acknowledging (at least on the speaker's part) the inadequacy of the concepts used to represent God. Praise, according to Marion, "feeds on the impossibility or, better, the impropriety of the category". Therefore, when speaking about God, individuals offer praise while recognizing the limitations of the concepts they use. The predicate expressions aren't intended to represent God accurately. In saying "God is good," speakers don't assert or believe that God possesses goodness in the same way we understand goodness. Our comparative analysis explored how cultural contexts shape mythological narratives. Examining creation myths from Babylonia and the Judeo-Christian tradition revealed contrasting portrayals of divinity. The Babylonian *Enuma Elish* features a violent power struggle among deities, with Marduk emerging as the creator god. In contrast, the Judeo-Christian account depicts a singular, omnipotent God who creates the universe through spoken word, emphasizing divine orderliness and benevolence. Similarly, flood myths from Mesopotamia and the Judeo-Christian tradition exposed differences in perspectives on divine justice and hope. Both depict floods as punishment, yet the *Epic of Gilgamesh* focuses on one hero's survival, while Noah's Ark emphasizes humanity's preservation and a future covenant with God. Hilary Putnam's Wittgensteinian approach to religious language in "Renewing Philosophy" (1992) exemplifies two key features of minimalism. First, Putnam highlights Wittgenstein's famous concept of "family resemblances" (1953). Wittgenstein challenged the idea that a word or phrase requires a single, definitive set of conditions for its correct use. Intuitively, this might seem necessary for a word to retain meaning across different contexts. However, consider the word "game." It applies to board games, card games, Olympic games, and so on, with no single feature universally present

across all uses. Putnam, following Wittgenstein, argues that similar "networks of similarities and relationships" connect different uses of a word, rather than a single, unifying definition (Springs, 2016). Putnam proposes that Wittgenstein applied this concept to language, reference, and truth. He argues that reference doesn't have a single, essential quality, but rather overlaps and similarities connect different ways of referring (Springs, 2016). Philosophical confusion arises, for example, when we try to apply the same standards of reference used for describing the physical world to mathematical statements. Putnam extends this point to religion: Religious language use shares similarities with and diverges from ordinary reference. However, framing the question as "really reference" or "not really reference" creates confusion. There's no single essence of reference... In essence, Wittgenstein is advising us against understanding religious language through rigid metaphysical classifications of discourse types. Putnam makes a similar argument regarding truth, descriptiveness, and other concepts related to realism. Second, Putnam proposes that truth can be understood as "idealised rational acceptability" (Springs, 2016). This doesn't mean truth hinges on current justification or what we find convincing based on available evidence. Rather, it suggests that truth isn't entirely independent of justification. To claim a statement is true implies that it could be justified. For religious discourse to be truth-apt, it's sufficient that its assertions are governed by internal standards of warrant (justification). While the standards of justification within religious discourse might differ significantly from those in science (appealing to religious authority figures wouldn't hold weight in a scientific context), the existence of such standards is a necessary condition. Therefore, a positive understanding of truth (and other realism-related concepts) in religion requires examining the specific standards of justification employed within various religious traditions. Ludwig Wittgenstein's ideas on religion have been influential in challenging the face-value theory of religious language. His observations are seen as supporting various alternative positions. Non-cognitivists, for instance, find resonance with Wittgenstein's characterization of religion as "a passionate commitment to a system of reference". Fictionalists draw on his suggestion that religious believers live according to specific "pictures" (Springs, 2016). Similarly, theorists who emphasize non-assertive speech acts find support in Wittgenstein's comparison of religious utterances to commands. Wittgenstein even briefly considered a subjectivist interpretation of God-talk. Given the limited and scattered nature of Wittgenstein's writings on religion, it's understandable that he wouldn't have developed a single, definitive view beyond his clear opposition to the face-value theory. Minimalist interpretations of Wittgenstein point to his apparent endorsement of a deflationary theory of truth, though he doesn't explicitly advocate

for Putnam's idealized justification theory (Springs, 2016). The strongest evidence for minimalism comes from his emphasis on the distinct uses of language in religious contexts compared to historical or scientific contexts (i.e., empirical and descriptive sentences). He highlights the differences in standards for warranting belief across these discourses. These include the circumstances that lead religious believers to judge something true, the nature of disagreements between believers and non-believers, and so on. This emphasis is evident throughout his work on religion. For example, Wittgenstein compares the religious belief in the Last Judgement with beliefs based on science or everyday observations ("There is a German airplane overhead"). While religious believers might talk about "evidence" and "historical events," Wittgenstein argues that the evidence and events cited in religious contexts don't function as reasons for belief in the same way that scientific evidence supports a hypothesis. In religious discourse, "reasons look entirely different from normal reasons" (Beale & Kidd, 2017). Religious belief is not "a matter of reasonability". Religious beliefs aren't hypotheses or opinions, and they can't be properly categorized as knowledge or possessing high probability. When historical facts are introduced to support religious beliefs, "they are not treated as historical, empirical propositions" (Deka, 2021). Here, Wittgenstein seems to go to some lengths to emphasize the contrast between religious discourse and empirical discourses. In fact, he suggests that when religious sentences are presented as reporting scientific facts or theories, they are fundamentally mistaken. The minimalist interpretation doesn't suggest that Wittgenstein views religion unfavourably compared to science. He's not implying, for example, that religion is merely expressive while science is truly descriptive. Instead, he's outlining the different standards that determine truth and descriptiveness within these distinct areas of discourse. By doing so, he sheds light on the unique characteristics of religious truth and other realism-related concepts.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study explored the rich world of mythological narratives through discourse analysis, narrative analysis, and comparative analysis. We examined how religious language utilizes figurative language and concepts like "family resemblance" to convey complex ideas. Narrative analysis revealed how plot structure, character development, and point of view shape meaning within myths. Comparative analysis highlighted the influence of culture on themes like creation and flood narratives, showcasing how these stories reflect differing views of divinity, justice, and hope. Ultimately, this study demonstrates the enduring power of

mythological narratives in transmitting cultural values, beliefs, and ideas across generations.

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